

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAJ-01 NIC-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 CU-04

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R 140736Z DEC 73

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8999

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC HONOLUL HI

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJ: DECEMBER'S RED FLAG: THE MODERATES SPEAK UP

SUMMARY: THE LATEST RED FLAG HAS ARTICLES THAT TOGETHER SUGGEST THE MODERATE POSITION IN THE CURRENT PRC DOMESTIC CONTROVERSY. THE ARTICLES ADVOCATE OPPOSING TIDES IN A DISCIPLINED MANNER, DEFENSIVELY EXTOLL THE PROGRESS MADE THUS FAR ON THE EDUCATIONAL FRONT, PRAISE THE "REVOLUTIONARY SENIORITY" OF OLDER CADRE, AND INDIRECTLY THREATEN THOSE WHO WOULD ADVOCATE USING VIOLENCE WITHIN CHINA TODAY. ONE PASSAGE HINTS ITS OPPOSITION TO NAMEING WANG HUNG-WEN CHIEF OF STATE. END SUMMARY.

1. SEVERAL ARTICLES IN DECEMBER'S RED FLAG (RF) TOGETHER DEVELOP WHAT LOOKS TO BE THE MODERATE POSITION ON CHINA'S DOMESTIC CONTROVERSY. THE KEYNOTE PIECE WHICH ADVOCATES A "SOBER AND CLEARHEADED" APPROACH TO "GOING AGAINST THE TIDE," EMPHASIZES LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
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THAT THE CAMPAIGN MUST BE UNDER "PARTY DISCIPLINE"---AN APPARENT WARNING TO PERSONS WHO WOULD OPPORTUNISTICALLY USE THE CAMPAIGN TO ATTACK THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP (WR 50).

2. THE MODERATE LEADERSHIP'S DEFENSE OF ITS EDUCATION POLICY SEEMS APPARENT IN ANOTHER RF ARTICLE. NOTING THAT STRUGGLES IN THE EDUCATIONAL SPHERE HAVE REFLECTED MAJOR CLASS STRUGGLES "LIKE A BAROMETER," THE ARTICLE POSITS FAIR WEATHER FOR THE PRESENT: "THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT THE HARD ICE HAS BEEN BROKEN" (LENIN). ELSEWHERE IT PROCLAIMS THAT SCHOOLS ARE "ONE BY ONE" BEING "SUBJECTED TO A REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION."

3. THE ARTICLE DOES NOT PRETEND THAT CONTROVERSY OVER EDUCATIONAL POLICY IS NON-EXISTENT. IN A REVEALING PASSAGE, IT MENTIONS "TWO DIFFERENT ATTITUDES" THAT EXIST "AMONG OUR COMRADES." ONE, HELD BY "ACTIVISTS," "AFFIRMS FULLY" THE ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE, BUT REMAINS "DISSATISFIED WITH THE STATUS QUO." THE OTHER VIEW IS ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE WHO "ONE SIDEDLY TALK ABOUT SO-CALLED 'EDUCATIONAL QUALITY'" AND "HOLD IN DOUBT" CULTURAL REVOLUTION EDUCATIONAL CHANGES. THIS GROUP, WHICH WANTS TO "LOOK BACKWARD," IS IN DANGER OF FALLING PREY TO "AN EXTREMELY SMALL NUMBER" OF REACTIONARIES.

4. THIS PRAISING THE SPUNK OF RESTLESS "ACTIVISTS," LIGHTLY CHIDING THOSE WHO WOULD LOOK BACKWARD, WHILE REMAINING DETACHED FROM BOTH AND INSTEAD EMPHASIZING THE PROGRESS TO DATE, SEEMS TO EXPRESS THE CHOUIST MODERATE LINE ON DUCATION. THE ARTICLE CONTAINS OTHER SIGNS OF CHOU'S INFLUENCE. IT TALKS OF "SETTING FORTH FACTS AND REASONING THINGS OUT" OF "MAKING REFORM OUR AMBITION," OF THE NEED TO "CONVINCE AND EDUCATE" COMRADES WHOSE CONFIDENCE HAS BEEN "SHAKEN."

5. PERHAPS MOST STRIKINGLY, THE PIECE DENOUNCES BOURGEOIS INFLUNCE "IN THE EDUCATION FRONT IN THE 17 YEARS AFTER LIBERATION," IN SPEAKING TO CANADIAN PREMIER TRUDEAU LAST OCTOBER, CHOU HAD SIMILARLY DESCRIBED PRC EDUCATION AS HAVING BEEN UNDER BOURGEOIS CONTROL "FOR 17 YEARS." (ODDLY THOUGH, WHILE CHOU ATTRIBUTED THE BOURGEOIS INFLUENCE TO KUOMINTANG (KMT) TEACHERS WHO DOMINATED THE SYSTEM, THE ARTICLE INSTEAD STRAINS TO PIN THE BLAME ON "THE STUFF OF SOVIET REVISIONISM INTRODUCED IN THE SCHOOLS 17 YEARS BEFORE THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION," OR IN 1949. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THIS HIGHLY UNUSUAL REFERENCE TO STALIN-ERA SOVIET "REVISIONISM" IS POSSIBLY DESIGNED TO WARD OFF PROBES INTO HOW MANY KMT TEACHERS STILL REMAIN IN THE SYSTEM TODAY--A PROBING THAT MIGHT FOLLOW ANY MODERATE ADMISSION THAT KMT INFLUENCE IN EDUCATION WAS STILL STRONG IN 1966.)

6. A THIRD DECEMBER RF ARTICLE, SPEAKING TO THE PROPER USE OF "YOUNG CADRE," DEFENDS THE CONCEPT OF SENIORITY BY WRITING "THERE IS A CERTAIN LIMIT TO EVERYONE'S EXPERIENCE....IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE YOUNG CADRE TO GO THROUGH A CERTAIN PERIOD OF PRACTICE SO AS TO ACCUMULATE EXPERIENCE ON THE WORK IN VARIOUS FIELDS WITH WHICH THEY THEMSELVES ARE NOT FAMILIAR."

IN ITS MOST SPECIFIC FORM, THE COMMENT COULD MEAN PARTY VICE CHAIRMAN WANG HUNG-WEN NEEDS MORE SEASONING BEFORE HE CAN BE NAMED CHIEF OF STATE, THUS REFLECTING SUPPOSED CURRENT CONTROVERSY OVER WHO, IF ANYONE, IS TO FILL THE ONLY GOVERNMENT SLOT ABOVE CHOU (WR 46).

7. THIS INTERPRETATION, OF COURSE, IS HIGHLY SPECULATIVE, BUT WHEN "SENIORITY" WAS PUT DOWN LAST MAY (WR 23) THE MEDIA SEEMED TO BE PAVING THE WAY FOR CADRE LIKE WANG TO MOVE UP. NOW RF SEEMS TO BE EXPRESSING MORE SYMPATHY FOR CADRE WITH "REVOLUTIONARY SENIORITY"--THOSE WITH "A LONG PERIOD OF EDUCATION FROM THE PARTY" WHOSE "LEADERSHIP ABILITY" IS CONSEQUENTLY "STRONGER."

8. A FOURTH RF ARTICLE TITLE "THE PROGRAM FOR CONSOLIDATING THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT" CONTAINS A MODERATE'S DEFENSE OF CHINA'S "STATE SYSTEM" AS BEING "FAR SUPERIOR" TO THAT OF "ALL CAPITALIST COUNTRIES." MORE BROADLY, THE ARTICLE ALSO DEFENDS THE PRC "SUPERSTRUCTURE" (UNDER ATTACK SINCE AUGUST), STATING IT CAME UNDER "EXPANDED" PROLETARIAT CONTROL DURING THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. TURNING THE ATTACK ON THOSE WHO WOULD "ABOLISH THE STATE MACHINE," THE ARTICLE'S AUTHOR WARNINGLY QUOTES MAO ON THE NEED TO "STRENGTHEN THE PEOPLE'S STATE APPARATUS--MAINLY THE PEOPLE'S ARMY, THE PEOPLE'S POLICE AND THE PEOPLE'S COURTS."

9. THE ARTICLE'S MOST INTRIGUING PASSAGE ABSORBS PORTIONS OF AN ARTICLE FROM THE LATEST ISSUE (NOVEMBER) OF THE SHANGHAI JOURNAL STUDY AND CRITICISM WHICH ENDORSED THE RADICAL JACOBIN PHASE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, INCLUDING JACOBIN USE OF VIOLENCE
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AGAINST "REACTIONARIES." HOWEVER, RF GOES ON TO ADD THAT AMONG THE "80 TO 90 PERCENT OF CHINA'S POPULATION" THAT MAKE UP THE "WORKER-PEASANT ALLIANCE," PROBLEMS SHOULD BE RESOLVED "BY THE DEMOCRATIC METHOD INSTEAD OF THE METHOD OF COMPULSION."

10. LEST INDIVIDUALS NOT BE PERSUADED OF THE MERITS OF DEMOCRACY "LED BY THE PARTY," THE ARTICLE CLOSES BY PRAISING PEOPLE WHO "SAFEGUARD SOCIALIST DISCIPLINE IN THE SAME MANNER AS THEY CHERISH THE PUPILS OF THEIR EYES." THIS CALL FOR DISCIPLINE, COMBINED WITH THE ARTICLE'S EARLIER REFERENCE TO THE STATE'S POLICE POWER, HINTS THAT THOSE SPEAKING THROUGH THIS ISSUE OF RF ARE WILLING TO DEAL FIRMLY WITH THOSE NOT ATTRACTED BY MODERATE APPEALS TO REASON.
OSBORN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, POLITICAL STABILITY, GOVERNMENT REFORM, POLITICAL LEADERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973HONGK12578
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731256/abqcefcc.tel
Line Count: 159
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 JUL 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27-Jul-2001 by shawdg>; RELEASED <27-Jul-2001 by thomasv0>; APPROVED <14-Dec-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DECEMBER'S RED FLAG: THE MODERATES SPEAK UP
TAGS: PINT, CH
To: STATE INFO PEKING
TAIPEI
TOKYO
CINCPAC HONOLUL HI
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005